

The History of Tewin Cowper Primary since 1792

Schooling in Tewin has played an important part in the formation of the village not only in educating the children but also in bringing the community together.

There have been four schools in Tewin. The first being a **The Strutt Sunday school founded in 1789**

It fell to the incomer Joseph Strutt to start a first school. John Carrington notes that there was no support for a school from the local gentry and that the leading family, the Cowpers, stood aloof. Carrington further records that despite this lack of support, Strutt, 'was the beginner of it at his own expense.'



1792 – The Yarborough School



The Yarborough school was bequest of the Revd. Dr Yarborough who was Rector of Tewin from 1728 to his death in 1775. He acquired what is now the Old School House and three cottages nearby in 1758. He bequeathed them in his will in trust to the Rectors of Tewin and Digswell so that they might provide an education for 10 poor children, both boys and girls. This was an advanced view in those days when girls were not thought to need formal education. These children were to be selected by the incumbent Rector.

The first Yarborough schoolmaster, John Pridmore was appointed somewhere between 1794 and 1798. He taught the three 'R's, biblical instruction and music as well as practical horticulture. In addition to the 10 free places, to make ends meet he took in locals at 1d a week and boarders from London at 3d a week. In 1805 the school had at least 40 boys boarding which would have brought in a tidy income for the school but John Pridmore, a drunkard, spent much of this in the village Pubs. John Pridmore left in 1839 and the school was closed in 1840.

1847 – The first Cowper School



In 1840 Lord Henry Cowper died and left money for the benefit of the Parish School and a Master and Mistress were to be employed. In 1847 the new school was complete – purpose built with adjoining living accommodation. It was a day school and no longer took on borders.

There is little history of the school until the 1870 Education Act required the keeping of a school log book. The school still holds all of these log books recording items of interest and significance and makes fascinating reading.

The school had an assembly room and two classrooms, one for the infants between 5 and 7 and one for the rest whose ages ranged from 8 to 14. Both classes had old boiler type heaters that the older boys took turns to keep stocked up with coke. Subjects included reading, writing, mathematics, history, drawing, nature study, arithmetic, English and dictation. The girls cooked one day a week and did knitting and sewing and the boys did woodwork in the Cedar hut. In addition to the gardening and selling vegetables they also kept poultry and bees.

1966 – The ‘New’ School: Tewin Cowper Church of England Primary School

The fourth village school as we know it now was purpose built on land near Canons Meadow. The school was designed by the Hertfordshire County Council’s well-regarded team of designers, in then the modern style with square lines, flat roof and a lot of glass and light. The premises consist of a main hall used for assembly, PE and serving lunch plus 3 main and two smaller classes.

Our school has a strong tradition of help from parents who have always given their time voluntarily to assist in the classrooms and outside. In 1968, the parents helped with the building of the school swimming pool. Don Edwards produced the plans and borrowed the JCB plus driver from his employers and Bill Taylor, a local builder who lived in the Old School House, was able to get the materials at cost price. They and other parents helped in the construction of the pool which has been in use ever since. Diane Hagger (Don Edward’s daughter and Tewin’s current Chair of Governors) recalls that Bill Furlong, the Headmaster at the time, took swimming lessons after school.

Our school in 2017 and proudly celebrating 225 years of history

